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Co-cultivation of Green Microalgae and Methanotrophic Bacteria for Single Cell Protein Production from Wastewater

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Conventional water treatment technologies remove nutrients via resource intensive processes. However, new approaches for residual nutrient recycling are needed to provide food to the increasing world population. This work explores the use of microbial biomass – methane oxidizing bacteria and green microalgae – as a means to recover nutrients from industrial wastewater and upcycle them to feed grade single cell protein. Results demonstrated that both algae and bacteria could remove or assimilate most of the organic carbon present in the wastewater. However, their growth stopped before nutrients and substrates in the gas phase (i.e., methane and oxygen for methanotrophs and carbon dioxide for algae) were depleted. Likely, algal growth was light limited and stopped after organic carbon was consumed, whilst growth of methanotrophic bacteria could be limited by trace elements (e.g., copper). Nevertheless, the amino acid profile of both the monocultures and the algal-bacteria consortium was suitable for substitution of conventional protein sources. Further research should focus on increasing productivity of biomass grown on wastewater resources.

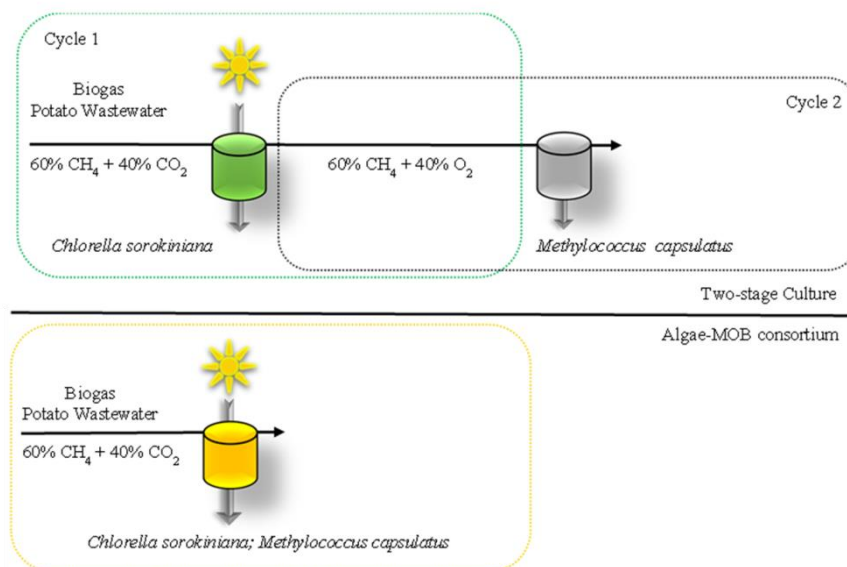


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the 2-stages process and 1-stage process.